

Surname: McGinn	First Name(s): Margaret	Army Number: W/160853	
Maiden name (if applicable): Jones	Name used during service: Jones	Rank: Sergeant	
Main base: Redhill Woking Leeds York Winchester	Training base: Droitwich Fenham Leicester Dalkeith Aldershot	Enrolled at: Droitwich	
Platoon/Section:	Company/Battery:	Group/Regiment:	Command:
Year(s) of service: 1942 to 1946	Reason for discharge: General demob. End of hostilities.	Trade: P.T.I.	
Uniform Issued: Greatcoat Hat Gloves Uniform jumper Tie 3 shirts 3 vests 3 woollen Knickers 3 khaki "passion killer" knicks 1 pair shoes 2 pair pyjamas Toothbrush Hairbrush Handbag Kit bag Bras Suspender belt 3 pairs khaki lisle stockings After P.T. Course: Track suit Shorts Shirts Plimsolls	Photo: 		

Description of daily tasks:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pay parade – once a week. • Kit inspectors – once a month. One had to stand beside ones bed displaying kit – laid out on the bed. The usual ploy was 1 one, 1 in the wash, 1 on display, to cover any discrepancies. • I never did fatigues, always worked alone (occasionally checked up on by an officer) except when in York. I helped organise sports days, tennis, cricket and mixed hockey (the men were nervous – the girls were so tough!) I must have worked a five day week, going home to S.E. London most weekends, return fare from Woking 5/- and I used the same ticket until the ticket inspector suggested I get a new one! Church parade once a month.
Pay book:	<p>Not available.</p>
Memorable moments:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My father died when I was 16, so I had no chance to go to university, but went to work in a City of London bank: a portion of my growing up years was spent struggling to work during the blitz, but it turned out to my advantage because on conscription into the ATS (no choice of service) the bank paid my salary for the whole of my ATS service, deducting Army pay, as I was still able to help support my mother. • Starting pay: 7/6d per week, which had to buy all cosmetics, entertainment etc. The NAAFI and YMCA were widely used. Lord Nuffield bought all the service girls sanitary towels – called Nuffies! • I met my Droitwich roommates at the medical centre, then again on the train. Carol remembered me all her life: I threw a netball during a P.T. lesson, she caught it on her little finger which was bent for life. At Droitwich (we used the Brine Baths Hotel) we had initial injections – lined up in a row; not for the faint hearted. At FFI (Free From Infection) parades the girls were lined up in knickers and shirt, the elastic of our knickers was pulled down and the M.O. (a man of course) gazed at our tummy to see if we had lice or were pregnant! • We all took knife/fork/spoon to meals. At the training centre girls who had head lice had their hair cut, disinfected and wrapped up in a scarf for days. Poor things – how embarrassing. A bath rota was necessary in many cases – hygiene was very different in those days. • During training recruits were classified as potential officers or N.C.O.s. • Physical training course in Fenham Barracks, Newcastle upon Tyne. • Posted to an A.T.S. holding company at Nuttfield Priory, Redhill, Surrey. • Posted to Woking, attached to R.A.S.C. holding Company, billeted in private houses in Woking and Byfleet. As the P.T.I. I had to travel to these towns by bike, festooned with the necessary equipment for games etc. My bike travelled with me throughout the war. • Coupons (redeemable from the NAAFI) for cigarettes and oranges (in season). I attended Spanish evening classes. Bought rug wool (coupon free) to make rugs which lasted about 30 years. • Another P.T. course Leicester Barracks where I made a life-long friend. It was so cold that we removed (strategically) struts from our bunks to fuel the heating stove. My legs got chapped and bled. • During the preparations for D Day the entire company from Woking was transferred to Leeds. Again the A.T.S. were in requisitioned houses – such filth! We had to scrub all the floors. The Headingly cricket ground was used by the

R.A.S.C. and A.T.S. for offices and cook-houses and the mess. I took my P.T. classes on the cricket pitch but was never allowed on the sacred test pitch which was maintained throughout the war. Again, I had to cycle between Headingley and Roundhay to take P.T. classes.

- After a few months, another P.T. course, in Dalkeith (near Edinburgh) where we were told that the smell from the adjacent sewage works was healthy. In an Edinburgh tea room one day I met (quite by chance) and old school friend on her honeymoon.
- Returned to Leeds, then a posting to York, billeted in the old barracks which had been condemned for the men! The A.T.S. had to wash in a central washing channel (there were 50 of us in the barrack room) – and it was claimed that we ‘enticed’ the men who queued up to look through the windows! A once-a-week bath in an ablution but with a dirt floor. Again, my fellow P.T.I.s cycled around the city and to outlying camps to take our classes.
- Another course – this time a remedial course – in Newton Abbott, a return to York then a posting to Liss (Hants) home of the army railway experts, billeted in (former) married quarters, my bicycle still being necessary.
- A course at the army P.T. school in Aldershot billeted in Farnborough. A great honour – my course was the first A.T.S. – but we were not allowed to wear the crossed swords awarded to the men!! Here I learnt to shower in 2 minutes – all part of the training.
- A posting to Winchester, billeted in King Alfred’s School attached to the A.T.S. Pay Corps. I was in the same sergeant’s mess as a girl who became my long-term friend in Birchington.
- Discharged in 1946, together with my faithful bike! In spite of all the courses and teaching during few years in the A.T.S. back in civilian life I couldn’t get a job as a teacher except by taking a 2 year course – marriage and a family called instead.
- I never felt I helped win the war – I suppose P.T.I.s helped keep the girls fit, but we were universally hated and the girls resented having the leave work and do P.T. in their uniform and return to work immediately. However, I made friends and travelled widely in England.

Photos:



P.T. Lesson outside the kitchen - Woking



P.T. School, Newcastle



Droitwich



P.T. School - Leicester



Army School of Physical Training (A.T.S. Wing) Aldershot 1945



Victory Parade – Leeds